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Independent claim 1 recites a method for distributing information concerning recommended steps for performing a process. The method includes the following steps:

- providing a computer network for communicating digital data between at least two locations;
- using the computer network to convey a request for a recommended process sequence of steps for performing a process from a first location to a second location;
- processing the request at the second location to produce the recommended process sequence of steps; and
- using the computer network to convey, from the second location to the first location, a response to the request that includes the recommended process sequence of steps.

Independent claim 10 similarly recites a method for distributing information concerning recommended steps for performing a process. The method includes the following steps:

- providing a computer network for communicating digital data between at least two locations;
- using the computer network to convey a request for a recommended process sequence of steps for performing a process from a first location to a second location; and
- using the computer network to convey, from the second location to the first location, a response to the request that includes the recommended process sequence of steps.

Sebastian discloses a computer-based system and method for the concurrent design of a part, the tool to make the part, and the processes used in making the part. Sebastian utilizes a system having a processor and a memory that stores a plurality of "feature templates." Each feature template is a

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representation of a primitive object having a form and a function. The feature templates are indexed by the function of the primitive object and include information relating to tools and processes to make the primitive object. The design system also includes an input device for receiving a request to design a part. This request includes one or more predetermined functions that the part performs. A core design module, executable by the processor, designs the part, the tool to make the part, and process to make the part by accessing the plurality of feature templates in the memory to locate one or more primitive objects that perform the one or more predetermined functions.

As such Sebastian does not describe a method for distributing information concerning recommended steps for performing a process as required by claims 1 and 10. The Examiner points to column 17, lines 51-55 of Sebastian as showing this requirement. However, the cited passage merely states that the "tool fabrication process planner module 80 is an expert system that determines the most appropriate fabrication method(s) for tool components, sequences the fabrication operations, and allocates shop resources to deliver tools in the shortest possible time." There is no suggestion that a recommended process is distributed to from one location to another.

Sebastian also fails to disclose the claimed step of using a computer network to convey a request for a recommended process sequence of steps for performing a process, wherein the request originates at a first location and is directed to a second location. The Examiner merely refers to column 11, lines 3-5 for a showing of this requirement. This passage states that the input device 35 may be a link to another computer system for receiving instructions over a network. This does suggest that the CPU 32, which executes the core design module, can be connected to a computer network. However, there is simply no indication that a "request for a recommended process sequence of steps for performing a process" is conveyed to the CPU 32 from the input device

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35, whether the input device be a computer network or other type of input means. As indicated in lines 62-66 in column 17 of Sebastian, *commands* such as text strings and mouse location references are input using the input device 35. Column 20, lines 62-66 also discuss entering *instructions* with the input device 35. Neither of these passages teaches using the input device to convey a *request* for a recommended process sequence of steps for performing a process. Many of the claims of Sebastian recite "an input device coupled to the processor receiving a request to design the part, the request including one or more predetermined functions that the part performs." This recitation does not clearly indicate that the request is conveyed to the processor. Moreover, this involves a request to design a part, not a request for a recommended process sequence of steps for performing a process.

Furthermore, Sebastian does not anticipate the claimed step of using a computer network to convey a response to the request that includes the recommended process sequence of steps for performing the process. The Examiner indicates that this step is taught by Sebastian at column 11, lines 5-14. However, there is no indication that a process developed by the CPU 32 is conveyed from the CPU 32 back to the input device 35. This passage does mention the output device 36 displaying information, but claims 1 and 10 require that the response be directed from the second location to the first location, the first location being the location where the request originated. The output device 36 is clearly not at the location where the request originated.

For the above reasons, it is respectfully submitted that independent claims 1 and 10 are allowable over Sebastian. Claims 2-9 and claims 13-15 depend from claims 1 and 10, respectively, and are thus also believed to be allowable. Furthermore, at least some of these dependent claims set forth limitations not met by the prior art. For instance, there does not appear to be any suggestion of using a decision tree or a notes tree in processing the

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recommended process, as set forth in claims 2-5. The passages cited by the Examiner do not disclose either decision trees or notes trees.

Independent claim 16 recites a method for providing information concerning recommended steps for performing a process. This method includes the steps of:

- providing, in a computer memory, a decision tree having at least two possible sequences of steps for performing a process;
- receiving a request, originating from a computer input device, for a recommended process sequence of steps for performing the process, the request including information for use in determining a recommended process sequence of steps from the at least two possible sequences in the decision tree;
- using, in a digital computer, the request and the decision tree to determine a recommended process sequence of steps for performing the process of a product; and
- transmitting the recommended process sequence of steps towards a computer output device.

As discussed above, Sebastian does not disclose conveying a request for a recommended process sequence of steps for performing a process over a computer network. For the same reasons, Sebastian does not disclose the claim 16 step of receiving a request, originating from a computer input device, for a recommended process sequence of steps for performing the process. At best, Sebastian discloses receiving a request to design a part. Sebastian also does not disclose providing a decision tree having at least two possible sequences of steps for performing a process or using, in a digital computer, a request and a decision tree to determine a recommended process sequence of steps for performing the process of a product.

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For the above reasons, it is respectfully submitted that independent claim 16 is allowable over Sebastian. Claims 17-20 depend from claim 16 and are thus also believed to be allowable.

The Examiner has rejected claims 11 and 12 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sebastian. This ground of rejection is respectfully traversed.

The Examiner indicates that it would have been obvious to use the World Wide Web, a local area network or a wide area network in light of Sebastian's mention of using a network. While not conceding the obviousness of using a specific type of network which Sebastian fails to disclose, applicant respectfully submits that even if Sebastian was modified to use one of these types of network, the reference would still fail to anticipate independent claim 10 for the reasons set forth above. Accordingly, claims 11 and 12, which depend from claim 10, are also not rendered unpatentable by Sebastian.

In view of the above, it is submitted that the claims are in condition for allowance. Reconsideration of the objections and rejections is requested. Allowance of claims 1-20 at an early date is solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date

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